

Message from Commissioner Nancy Navarretta



March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM), a grassroots campaign designed to help raise awareness of the prevention, treatment and recovery services available for those adversely affected by gambling. It is estimated that 2% of Connecticut residents meet the criteria for disordered gambling, which is around 72,000 people. That is enough to fill up the XL Center in Hartford nearly four and a half times. When you consider that each problem gambler adversely impacts up to 9 people in their lives (family, friends, coworkers, etc.), the ripple effect grows to nearly 650,000 individuals affected. I have heard heartbreaking stories of the devastating toll of disordered gambling—suicides, families turned upside down, life savings depleted. But there is hope—treatment is available, and recovery is possible.

PGAM brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including public health organizations, treatment providers, advocacy groups and gambling operators. These stakeholders work together to increase public awareness of problem gambling and the availability of prevention, treatment and recovery services, and to encourage healthcare providers to screen clients for problem gambling.

[DMHAS' Problem Gambling Services](#) division offers an array of problem gambling recovery services for Connecticut residents. This includes prevention programs through the [RBHAOs](#), treatment through gambling-specific [Bettor Choice Treatment Programs](#), and integrated services ([DiGIn](#)). With the recent expansion of gambling options in our state, we need to ensure that those who are most vulnerable to harm are aware of the options for help that are available. Read on for more information about some of these options.

Regional Gambling Awareness Teams

Through prevention efforts, early intervention, and access to treatment we can potentially mitigate the damaging effects of problem gambling and get those needing help into recovery. Here in Connecticut, we have five Regional Gambling Awareness Teams that bring together professionals from the prevention, treatment and recovery communities as well as local community members to raise awareness of problem gambling and resources for help. This allows us to take a community-specific approach to tackling this issue. For more information, visit GamblingAwarenessCT.org.

PROBLEM GAMBLING AFFECTS THE WHOLE FAMILY. WE CAN HELP.

PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem and wants help

CALL **1-888-789-7777** OR VISIT **CCPG.ORG/CHAT**

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Spotlight: Fiorigio “Fred” Fetta, Associate Professional Counselor, DMHAS Problem Gambling Services



Fiorigio (Fred) Fetta, LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor), ICGC-II (International Certified Gambling Counselor, level-II), BACC (Board Approved Clinical Consultant), CGT (Certified Gambling Disorder Trainer), AADC (Advanced Alcohol & Drug Counselor) has provided clinical oversight for the treatment and integration programs for Problem Gambling Services with DMHAS since 2014. Prior to this, he provided treatment at United Community & Family Services for individuals impacted by gambling disorder and affected loved ones in Eastern Connecticut for seven years in the roles of supervisor and clinician of the Bettor Choice Gambling Treatment Program. Fred serves as the chair of the National Council on Problem Gambling's Treatment Committee.

[Click to learn more about DMHAS Problem Gambling Services](#)

What do you love most about your job?

I love the opportunity to help in making a positive change. For me to be my most productive, having an environment that is comfortable and encouraging is key. I am blessed that I have this available to me through my colleagues at DMHAS, especially within Problem Gambling Services and the Statewide Services Division. I also work with incredible staff members throughout the non-profit system in treatment, recovery, prevention, and others, whose passion about their work inspires me on a regular basis.

Are there any challenges?

Addiction is devastating, whether it is in the form of a substance or behavior. In 2013, Gambling Disorder was placed in the same category as Substance Use Disorders in DSM-5, but the general population still doesn't understand the harms of gambling as we do with substance use. I believe we are making progress, but we still have to work to raise awareness that the brain on gambling is like the brain on substance use, and with a brain disease it takes more than just willpower to overcome the impacts.

Screening Day is a big part of the PGAM campaign, why is it so important?

It is important to assess for Gambling Disorder because it often goes undetected, particularly with co-occurring disorders. Unlike with alcohol or substance use, we can't smell gambling, or see sedated behaviors and the like. There isn't a test we can use to discover gambling, so having that conversation is important. Additionally, it helps to define what we mean by gambling. Introduce the discussion with something like: 'In the past 12 months, have you participated in any of the following: keno, lottery scratch offs, betting on sports, playing cards for money, going to the casino, gambling online, Off Track Betting, Daily Fantasy Sports, and purchasing loot boxes in videogames?' Talking about different behaviors can raise awareness of what gambling looks like in our state because many individuals associate gambling with the casinos, but don't see these additional behaviors as gambling.

Problem Gambling Resources

Overview of Problem Gambling Services in Connecticut (click image to watch)



Warning Signs of Problem Gambling

1 Preoccupation with gambling, such as constantly planning how to get more gambling money



2 Needing to gamble with increasing amounts of money to get the same thrill



3 Feeling restless or irritable when you try to cut down on gambling



4 Gambling to escape problems or relieve feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or depression



5 Trying to get back lost money by gambling more (chasing losses)



6 Lying to family members or others to hide the extent of your gambling



7 Jeopardizing or losing important relationships, a job, or school/work opportunities due to gambling



For HELP call 1-888-789-7777 | Text CTGAMB to 53342 | Live Online Chat: CCPG.ORG/CHAT

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING?

Gambling responsibly means taking steps to reduce risks or harms to yourself that can occur when gambling. There are those that can get themselves into trouble financially, for others their gambling can cause issues with friends and family, or some may drink too much and/or use other substances while they play. It's important to remember that all gambling activities have risk and to enjoy a safer playing experience, you must be aware of the risks and how you can minimize them. [Click here for more information.](#)

Responsible Play THE CT WAY

Gambling Problem? Help is available.
Call 888.789.7777 or visit ccpg.org

March 2022 Events and Trainings

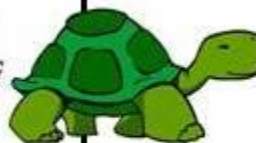
- March 16: [Region 1 PGAM Event – Fish & Chips](#)
- March 17: [TTASC Gambling Prevention Training Part 2](#)
- March 22: [Region 3 PGAM Event – Cryptocurrency](#)
- March 23: [Youth Media Project Showcase Event](#)
- March 23: [Region 3 PGAM Event - The Real Gaming World: Esports, Streaming & Gambling](#)
- March 25: [Region 4 PGAM Event - Gambling 101: The Nuts and Bolts](#)
- March 29: [Region 5 PGAM Event - Not Just a Game: CT Gambling Expansion and Potential Impacts for Youth](#)
- March 30: [Free Webinar: The Changing Landscape of Sports Wagering](#)

Did You Know?

- ✓ Although problem gambling is underdiagnosed and gaming addiction is a newly recognized disorder, approximately **2% of people will have a gambling disorder in their lifetimes.**
- ✓ Individuals living within 50 miles of a casino are twice as likely to develop a gambling problem.
- ✓ Disordered gambling has highest rate of suicidal ideation among all of the addictive disorders.

PGS

PROBLEM
GAMBLING
SERVICES



Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services



PROBLEM GAMBLING
AWARENESS MONTH

→ AWARENESS + ACTION